THE Reconstructionist

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REALITIES AND VALUES *CORRESPONDENCE*

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

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DITORIALS

IPLICATIONS OF THE ARRISON REPORT

SHORTLY after the first flush of excitement over vic-ry in Europe, disquieting reports kept ckering through from the concentration mps. Many of the complex problems e liberated would face after victory, d been anticipated, at least in thought. r one problem, however, we were com-etely unprepared. In all the voluminous writing and talk about the post-war ture of European Jewry, no one foreld that to the overbrimming cup of woe the liberated there would be added in-fference, neglect and downright sever-y on the part of the American military nder whose control large numbers of ewish survivors would come.

The recently published report of Earl arrison to President Truman makes this rystal clear. It shows that the American ilitary who were officially responsible r ameliorating the frightful living con-itions in the concentration camps, in any instances displayed an abysmal ck of energy and of sympathy in deal-g with the situation. Not without a easure of truth did one of the inter-ees sum up the great "liberation": "The only thing that has been changed are the guards." There is no need to enter into the details of the Harrison report for, fortunately, we are assured that, even before its delayed publication, notable improvements had already been made. Such improvements, Mr. Harrison stresses, do not constitute a solution. His concluding paragraph summarizes what he dems the only feasible and just solution. It merits quotation. "The civilized world owes it to this handful of survivors to provide them with a home where they can again settle down and begin to live as human beings."

The chapter cannot be closed, however, without underscoring its meaning; a meaning which, transcending this particular episode, bodes no good for the future of the peace. What does this shameful neglect of "this handful of survivors" reveal if not a mind totally innnocent of any understanding of the social and political implications of this war? To such a mind, the war was nothing more than a series of military campaigns that had to be won. The total objective of the war was nothing more than the defeat and disarmament of the enemy. Once this was accomplished, one could treat with the enemy on the old pre-war basis, a basis which, with an unfathomable naivete (or shall we say stupidity?), regards

the struggle between Nazism and the forces of freedom as simply the German counterpart of the perennial American Democratic-Republican squabble.

Happily, the particular "builder of the peace" who so described it, has been removed to a position where he will be able to reconstruct nothing more than the history of the campaign which he fought, and fought brilliantly at that. It is difficult to believe, however, that General Patton is the solitary illustration of the type of mind to which we refer. Generals have no monopoly on the failure to grasp the fundamentals of the war. Statements by privates and corporals do not make the headlines. But they do reveal a trend of thinking; and a dangerous trend it is.

All informed, reliable observers of post-war Germany concur in the conclusion that the overwhelming majority of Germans remain unashamed and unrepentant. They regret nothing except, of course, the loss of the war. Hitler made a mistake in his military calculations. The German mentality remains what it was: a fantastic, amoral mechanism run amok because it is driven by men intoxicated with the heady brew of race superiority, and a destiny to rule the world. With the removal of the ban on fraternization, the American soldier now moves freely among the German people. Failing to understand the German mind and temper, precisely because it is so foreign to his own, the GI sees nothing but the externals.

Is it any wonder that Mr. Raymond Daniell of the New York *Times* can report that "pity for Germans rises in U. S. ranks"? "He (the GI) is going home," writes one of their more discerning number, "with the feeling that, after all, he is more akin to the German people than, say, to the French. He is enormously impressed by German tidiness and accuracy." The latter phrase sets old bells ringing in one's memory. . . . Mussolini has the trains running on time. . . . Tru the German is ever so tidy and accura The lists of their victims at Oswieci and the other slaughter houses, we models of detail and exhaustiveness; eve victim was neatly tattooed with a numb The German accurate, scientific mi could have asked for no greater efficien than that with which the gas chambe were operated; nothing wasted, huma bones for fertilizer, etc. The Germa mind did indeed ask no questions a passively acquiesced where it did not a tively participate in horrors that w shock men unto the last generatio Only a distorted vision can regard t German mind and spirit as being mo akin to that of America than are the mi and spirit of any other European peop

It is probably too late to correct t error. Certainly it is not too early to wa against its possible consequences. T Potsdam Declaration, like any oth declaration, must be carried out by me Only men who truly comprehend t mind and temper of the German peop can be entrusted to follow through rigo ously that process of denazification whi alone can render Germany safe for t world. Such men might well learn to r cite daily the prayer of Sir Franc Drake: "O Lord God, when Thou give to Thy servants to endeavor any gre matter, grant us also to know that it not the beginning but the continuing the same until it be thoroughly finishe which yieldeth the true glory."

THE VERSATILE COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM

JUST in case the Jewis people does not have enou *tsoros* from the military administration i Germany, or from the Labor Gover ment in England, or from the ant Semites, native and imported, in Americ

aey have the American Council for Ju-aism, which contrives, in an astound-gly versatile manner, to cooperate with ll three.

The Council rushes to the assistance of he military by arranging for Rabbi lmer Berger to broadcast, coast to coast, hat the Jews do not want any special reatment, no "privileges." Rabbi Berger ould insist, therefore, that when Poles re repatriated, the "Jewish Poles" should o along with them and not complain, ven if they are pogromized. No excep-ons, no "privileges." If the Jews who ere German citizens are subject to the risdiction of occupation forces, they ould be treated as regular German na-onals. No exceptions, no "privileges."

Fortunately for the Jews of Europe, hile Rabbi Berger was mouthing his atuous nothings over the air, the presses f the newspapers were already rolling ith the Harrison report, which gave the e to the Council for Judaism. Accord-ng to Harrison, who actually saw the ituation from closer up than Philadel-hia, the Jews of Europe are in a ca-egory apart from all other victims of the war, and require special treatment, not s a privilege, but as a right. "Jews as ews," he wrote, "(not as members of heir nationality groups), have been more everely victimized than the non-Jewish members of the same or other nationali-ies."

Simultaneously, Rabbi Berger and his ellow denizens of the ivory tower lend id and comfort to the British govern-ment which is in the throes once again f violating a pledged word. Where, O where should Britain hear a kindly word n defense of betrayal and inhuman cal-lousness if not from the lips of the Coun-cil leaders? The Jews, they say, don't really want Palestine — so don't worry about those promises. You were misled. When you took over the Mandate you had the peculiar notion that *all* the Jews were behind the plan. Relax. The Zion-ists are not *all* the Jews.

This refrain appeared in the press the very morning after the Madison Square Garden rally in New York. Very em-barrassing for the Council that the Gar-den had to close its doors an hour before meeting time, that tens of thousands of Jews swarmed the surrounding streets. Very embarrassing that the American Jewish Conference, the chairman of whose Interim Committee, Henry Mon-sky, presided at the rally, consists of an overwhelming majority of Zionists. Very embarrassing that practically all Ameri-can rabbis are Zionists.

The Council leaders insist that the Zionists are merely vocal, not numerous. Well, here's a proposition: not that Mr. Rosenwald needs the money, but we would be willing to engage Madison Square Garden, *at our expense,* for the Council for Judaism, and challenge the Council to fill *half* of it with Jews who share their sentiments. This must defi-nitely exclude pro-Zionist hecklers, vag-rants who wish to keep warm, and anti-Semites who relish the thought that Zion-ists are un-American.

These last mentioned are the third beneficiaries of the Council's program. They are delighted to welcome Rabbi Berger into their midst. "Rabbi Berger seems to be an America Firster," wrote Gerald L. K. Smith, who certainly can be trusted to recognize an ally when he sees one. And why not? Do the Council leaders not ask: Are you an American or are you a Zionist? The anti-Semites are greatly indebted to the Council for pointing out that Gov. Dewey, Mayor La Guardia, Henry Wallace, Dr. Lowder-milk, etc., etc., are bad Americans.

Albert Einstein has written the per-fect characterization of the Council, out of his own tragic experience: "This or-

ganization appears to me to be nothing more than a pitiable attempt to obtain favor and toleration from our enemies by betraying true Jewish ideals and by mimicking those who claim to stand for 100 per cent Americanism. I believe this method to be both undignified and ineffective. Our opponents are bound to view it with disdain and even with contempt, and in my opinion, they will be justified. He who is untrue to his own cause cannot command the respect of others. Apart from these considerations, the movement in question is a fairly exact copy of the *Zentralverein Deutscher Staatsbuerger Juedischen Glaubens* (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith) of unhappy memory, which in the days of our crucial need showed itself utterly impotent and corroded the Jewish group by undermining the inner certitude by which alone our Jewish people could have overcome the trials of this difficult age."

We hope Mr. Lessing Rosenwald is satisfied with where his money is going.

POLITICAL EXPLOITATION OF RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL HATREDS

AT the instance of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the three mayoralty candidates for New York City, Judge Jonah J. Goldstein, Newbold Morris, and General William O'Dwyer, have pledged to refrain from appeals to racial and religious differences in the current campaign. That is good, as far as it goes. There is no denying the importance of preventing the exploitation of religious and racial prejudices for the purpose of advancing the political ambitions of candidates. Anti-Semites, Negro-baiters and all the other hate-mongers welcome nothing more than a political campaign for the opportunities it holds forth for airing their poisonous propaganda. The passions engendered by the political conflict are of inestimable value to the attainment of their aims. The menace latent in their activities during a campaign cannot be gauged. The heat of the political contest may ignite a fuse that sets off a fatal explosion.

But merely to pledge the candidates for high office to refrain from exploiting racial and religious antagonism is not enough. The candidates for mayor of New York are all of them good citizens with decent records of public service, and, pledge or no pledge, there is little likelihood that they would, of their own initiative, say anything to incite one race or religion against another. The danger comes from the hangers on, from the political bosses and their henchmen, who are in politics for selfish reasons and are not responsible to an electorate. Being thorough opportunists, they do not scruple to avail themselves of any sinister slogan, of any vicious innuendo that may help their party to victory. They are not squeamish about allying themselves with disreputable rabble-rousers ambitious to become the *gauleiters* of American nazism.

We have too vivid a recollection of what took place in the last presidential election to feel secure merely because the candidates have pledged themselves not to engage in such vicious practices. In that election also the candidates were pledged not to make anti-Semitism an issue. And, as far as they personally were concerned, they kept that pledge. But the Roosevelt policy was characterized as the "Jew Deal" and the slogan "Clear it with Sidney" was accompanied by references, direct or implied, to his being a Jew.

We realize that it is no easy matter to control this situation, but we should demand more of the candidates than merely that they personally refrain from rousing

religious and racial antagonisms. We must insist that they repudiate all such utterances made in support of their own candidacy and that they publicly denounce the persons who are guilty of making them.

REALITIES AND VALUES

THE NUMBER OF MEN REJECTED by the army as mentally unfit or discharged from it for the same reason, amounts to the alarming number of 2,300,000. These figures give us some idea of the extent of mental disorder to be found today even among a people that enjoys as high a standard of material well-being as the American. Whether the mental health of the nation is deteriorating or whether modern science is only now beginning to recognize the symptoms of mental ailments and the situation was never any better, it is hard to say. At any rate, the figures are a challenge to all those agencies that have any responsibility for the public health. Among these must be reckoned our religious institutions. For in the field of mental hygiene and mental therapy religion has a great role to play. All seminaries for the training of religious leaders should include in their course some instruction in psychiatric technique and mental hygiene that can be applied in religious education and in the pastoral work of the rabbi, priest or minister.

▼

DROPSIE COLLEGE IN PHILADELPHIA announces the establishment of a Department of Education and the appointment of Dr. Isaac B. Berkson as Professor of Education. Dropsie College is a postgraduate school for Semitic studies. It has no theological bias and its other departments offer no specific vocational training. The establishment of a Department of Education is therefore something of a departure from previous policy and a welcome one. It shows that the administration of the school is reluctant to limit its activities to an insulated, "ivory tower" scholarship. In announcing the establishment of this new department, the College declares that it was moved to take this action by "the critical situation confronting the Jews as well as the entire civilized world today." It states as its specific aim "to train experienced educators with knowledge and perspective, who will function as superintendents and and supervisors of Jewish education on a community basis." We congratulate Dr. Abraham A. Neuman, President of Dropsie College, and his associates on the new project and on having secured the services of so able an educator as Dr. Berkson to carry it out.

▼

MANY OF OUR READERS MUST have seen the movie, *Ragged Angels*. In that movie, Jascha Heifetz acts as a sort of patron saint to a music school in the slums, solving its financial troubles by donating his services at one of its concerts and thus securing for its gifted pupils the opportunity to develop their musical talents. It now appears that, in real life, he has assumed a role not very different from that he played on the screen. He recently accepted the national honorary chairmanship of a project to collect musical instruments for the thousands of refugee children now in Palestine. He thus contributes to the fulfilment of the prophecy: "Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the sound of music."

▼

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL OF THE *Daily News* now joins the ranks of rank anti-Semites, who have not the decency to fight under true colors. He recently accused four Jews, Henry Morgenthau, Sidney Hillman, David Niles and Felix Frankfurter of conspiring to "disgrace

and remove Gen. George S. Patton." Their "efforts" were crowned with success when Gen. Eisenhower took action against him. This is rotten journalism and worse Americanism. In the first place, these men did not carry on any drive against Patton. Secondly, Patton disgraced *himself*. Third, if these Jews or any other Americans had urged the removal of Patton, they would have been doing exactly the right thing. But O'Donnell puts it in such a way as to make the decent thing seem indecent. Thus, the denial by the "accused" men implies: "We did *not* commit the dastardly act." In which case, O'Donnell is at least left with an implied confession that fighting Patton *would have been* un-American, and giving the Nazis a generous deal is therefore quite justified. Nice going, O'Donnell! In the meantime, we ardently hope that decent Americans will recognize American Nazis when they see them, and will use every means to strip them of the power to do mischief.

▼

THE CHOICE OF JUDGE SIMON H. Rifkind as civilian adviser on Jewish affairs to Gen. Eisenhower is as fine a choice as one could hope for from any source. Judge Rifkind is not only an able lawyer and judge; he is the very pattern of a modern intelligent and interested Jew. A graduate of the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, he has not permitted his secular studies to progress at the expense of his Jewish studies and Jewish activity. The job before him requires a keen mind and a heart of flesh. Judge Rifkind has both. We wish him Godspeed.

▼

G.I.'S MAY NOW STUDY AT the Hebrew Institute of Technology at Haifa as part of their benefits under the G.I. Bill of Rights. This represents a wonderful opportunity for American Jews to pursue their studies in engineering and industrial arts, while at the same time living in Eretz Yisrael and learning from within the spirit of modern, reborn Israel. It will give the *Technion* an unusual opportunity to demonstrate its capacity to turn out first rate men. It will cement relations between the two countries to the advantage of both. We sincerely hope many Jewish — and even non-Jewish G.I.'s — will grasp the opportunity.

The Role of the Religious Fellowship

By NATHAN A. BARACK

RECONSTRUCTIONISTS will probably make the most significant contribution in our battle to revitalize Jewish life if they successfully found religious fellowship chapters on a lasting and national scale. The fellowship chapters will be neither effective nor lasting, however, unless they are dynamic, cohesive, and coordinated by a group of leaders similarly united. For the problem of restoring meaning to our life, although it has aspects peculiarly Jewish, is nevertheless part of a world crisis engendered by dynamic forces. It cannot, consequently, be solved by us mainly in terms of Jewish group values such as art, music, and literature. To have the power to move their members to grapple with the vast problems we face as Jews and as citizens of a changing civilization, the fellowship will have to be religious to the *core*.

The importance of a religious fellowship to those who seek not only the phil-

osophy but also the realization of a meaningful Jewish way of life today is obvious. In general, persons who are united are more effective than those who strive in isolation to realize the ideals they share. A union tends to strengthen its members and to make of them a living force. Even if a group of individuals has only a single common task to accomplish, their union is definitely necessary. The fact that our goal is the reconstruction of a *way of life,* once identified with a whole people, only part of which now professes faith in Judaism, would render the establishment of the fellowship mandatory even in a less tumultuous world. In a society passing through a moral crisis, such a fellowship in urgently needed.

In the past, to be a Jew meant to *accept* Judaism in toto. Membership in *'kelal Yisrael'* (the totality of Israel), was automatic. The Jewish community was a force to its members and to the world. But, because of forces the nature of which has already been discussed in THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, membership in the Jewish community no longer signifies religious living. Certainly, Jewish secularists, even if active participants in the national, cultural and humanitarian aspects of Jewish life, cannot be considered proponents of the religious *Anschauung.* The Jewish community, therefore, cannot be the *unit* for the fostering of the religious way of life.

Paradoxically, the very fact that the Jewish religion and the Jewish people were once inseparable prevents the synagogue from becoming the unit force in the revitalization of the Jewish way of life. Formerly, the synagogue, the spatial symbol of religion, was the hub of Jewish religious, cultural and social life (*bet hatefillah, bet hamidrash, bet hakeneset*). When many Jews abandoned Judaism wholly or partly, the synagogue still remained the central institution in the Jewish community. There are people who belong to synagogues for vague "Jewish" reasons or because of a nostalgia for what they once found meaningful in their youth. They will neither forsake the synagogue nor will they change their essentially irreligious ways. Within the synagogues proper, there is, consequently, the need of organizing those who seek to make religion a force in personal and social life.

Jewish life can be revitalized only through the organization of religious fellowship groups. Yet the organizations will not come into being automatically. Basically, they can and will arise because they must, by historic necessity. But since a movement requires leadership, there is a need for fellowship groups of religious leaders *within the rabbinate.* Here we must distinguish between the rabbi of yesterday and his successor of today. A great rabbi in the past was a profound scholar but simultaneously he was a great religious leader. Today, many a capable rabbi is recognized as a leader for his achievements in non-religious spheres. And yet, because of the traditional connotation of *rabbi,* he is popularly regarded as a religious leader. Evidently, this is not conducive to the advancement of the truly religious life. Furthermore, it is not unusual to find rabbis who, because of a nationalistic, cultural or philanthropic approach to Judaism, do not consider themselves insincere for being in the rabbinate, although avowedly they are not religious individuals. Religion, however, is greater than loyalty to Jewish group values and to humanitarian pursuits.

Lay fellowship groups must, consequently, be led and coordinated by leaders who are willing to be in the forefront of their followers in the battle for a truly religious way of life with all that it implies for the individual, the home, and society. (Our Rabbis have aptly observed

that Joshua was told by the angel that the Israelites were defeated at Ai because he, Joshua, unlike Moses who had always led his forces in battle, stayed at home. A leader cannot inspire his followers with courage if he is unwilling to hazard more than they. A leader who sends his forces into battle and stays at home is not a true leader; he is not a true *follower;* at most, he is a sympathizer.)

The problem of the leader, however, will be radically more difficult than that of the layman, because in the case of the former the endeavor to foster a larger and truer religious way of life is closely related to the means of earning his livelihood. In organizing and promoting the fellowships there will be inevitable obstacles to surmount. There will be opposition and misunderstanding. Synagogue lay leaders will resent being excluded from fellowship groups in cases where it may be necessary to exclude some of them. To make the fellowship effective, leaders will have to battle the current emphasis on congregational membership and rabbis' salaries. The potential leader of the fellowship, admittedly lacking prophetic clarity of vision, full of personal intrepidity and unconditional love of the ideal, will be in need of his own fellowship for mutual inspiration and support, and for the elimination of insincere leaders from the religious field. There will be leaders who will antagonize their congregations and be discharged. Other fellowship members will have to aid in various ways, including perhaps in founding fellowship synagogues and subsidizing them.

Once the lay and rabbinic fellowship groups are established we can expect them to be a force both in the general religious development of the nation and in evolving a meaningful Jewish life, through actual living. As far as Judaism is concerned, new forms of religious living can and should arise only through these fellowship chapters. This is in the tradition of the birth of great movements in history and is not incompatible with democratic faith in the masses. If we trace some of the origins of the concepts of religious liberty, we find that it is in the spirit of the meaning and working of democracy. It is commonly believed that democracy is the product of the Judeo-Christian philosophy. That is true only in part. The two religions did teach the sacredness of the human personality. They stressed love and justice. In the Bible we find encouragement of political democracy. However, neither Judaism nor Christianity taught that man has a *right to his wrong convictions,* a basic tenet of modern democracy. Although Judaism always had a wide range for doctrinal differences, it did not permit freedom of expression on principles. The Christian Church did not allow any differences, once it was in a position to enforce its will. Even Protestant denominations, themselves born in the struggle for freedom to follow their religious beliefs, denied that right universally. (The *existence* of numerous Protestant sects, however, was a force in the establishment of freedom of religion, at least in America.)

The *right* to wrong convictions came as a product of modern science. (Of course, sociological factors always operate when an idea gains acceptance.) It was stated by the English, French and American philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries. The most cogent argument for freedom of belief was that compulsion does not alter one's conscience, the basis of true religion. Also, modern science undermined the authority of revealed religion and strengthened that of reason. Since the minds of individuals differ, democracy became a system of living together.

his surely, does not mean that every individual has true beliefs. Nor does it even mean that his wrong convictions must be respected as correct, simply because they please him. It means that we must respect the individual and allow him to pursue his own way insofar as that is in harmony with the equal rights of other persons. It means that, if decisions for action have to be made, we must follow the will of the majority. But it also means that erroneous views must be pointed out and striven against.

Hence, while an individual's right to religion or no religion must be carefully defended, it is equally necessary to realize that he or a group can be wrong, for there are absolute principles as well as human relativisms. It is true that symbols which have no emotional significance to one may evoke profound response from another, depending on his background and training. However, even if all the Whites believed that a Negro deserved fewer human rights than they, they would nonetheless be wrong. In certain states of society, the ways of the majority cannot be accepted even for the purpose of living together. One cannot speak of evolving ways of religious living with those given to self-interest and pursuit of comfort. That can come only from a group healthy and truth-seeking.

Democratically, synagogues have a right to release leaders whose teachings and ways they find objectionable. But we must realize that socially-minded, power-desirous congregations cannot be the determiners of what true religion is or should be. The maturer Judaism will grow from the experiences and ideas of the fellowship groups only. Eventually, they will sway the masses. This is the democratic process. It is, above all, in harmony with the historical perspective of our great prophets.

Who will be eligible for membership in the fellowship? A more apropos question would be, who will join them? The answer is that generally all those who sincerely seek the growth of the intelligent, genuinely religious forces will gravitate to the fellowship. Paraphrasing the words in Jeremiah (Chapter 28 v. 9)—"the prophet whose words come true, he is the one sent by God"—we believe that if the fellowship is truly what it is meant to be, it will attract only those individuals who will make it a genuine force. By force we do not mean that pseudo-intellectuals and quasi-liberals will praise it. We mean that it will be the medium for a transformation in life and will provide the spiritual element of the socially progressive currents. As individuals, the members of the true fellowship will follow a way of life that blends fearlessness and sympathy, love of truth and love of man. They will attract not those commonly supposed to be great or religious but those actually so—if there are those in our midst.

Whether there are those in our midst, only God knows, and in time we shall know, too. One thing is definite: war, the effects of which we are experiencing at present, is caused by a breakdown of the very fabric of a passing civilization, even if its bright colors still strike the eye. But war does not create a new fabric. War does not bring out the best in man. Actual combat, like a storm, *tests* men. But war as a whole, much larger than combat, produces evils which only those propped by a faith in the ultimate goal for which the war is fought, can withstand. Men in the non-front areas are virtually in vast deserts, threatening to sap them of all vitality. Despite distorted reports to the contrary, the deserts will prove more powerful than countless men. For this reason even the chaplains will not necessarily bring about the spiritual reawakening we seek. Generally, they are good

people, eager to help, impelled originally by a desire to serve. But what the war means to them depends on what they *brought* to it and on where they are stationed. Acquainting some person with Judaism or getting additional young people to services is not building Judaism. Worship is like air; one periodically goes out for fresh air, but one cannot live without air at any time. The religious person, likewise, attends inspiring, public services to refresh and reinspire himself; but at all times he worships God by living religiously.

The need for a religious fellowship i clear. The time for contenting oneself with formulating a basic religious philosophy is past. At least the fundamentals of the philosophy have been enunciated it is time now to begin to live it. It will fulfill itself only by our living it. That will be the real test of the power and truth of the philosophy. How can it stir its followers into action necessitating sacrifice? "The Torah survives only through him who is willing to give his life for it." Not the socratic but the prophetic way can move worlds.

A Camera to Pray to

By AHBE JAY TREU

I NEVER saw a camera I'd want to pray to. Still, I'm not sure I did the right thing that Friday night. There's so much unhappiness in the world as it is, maybe I should have kept my mouth shut? But it wasn't my fault that the fat guy with the turret camera started up with me.

I was up in the mountains, Sullivan County, N. Y., where the elite of Jewry congregated in one of the better hotels. Maybe I should not say "congregated," because, strictly speaking, when it came to services Friday evening, only fifteen people attended. The *Shul* was next to a card room. Well, they were on a vacation, from *Shul,* too, I guess. Still, 15 out of 750, in my language that's only a minyan and a half!

When I left the *Shul,* I first noticed this fat fellow toying with his camera. His manicured finger nails turned the lens, and I must admit, he did present a very rich-looking picture. As I passed by, minding my own business, thinking about the services, all of a sudden he says, "A young guy like you going in for stuff like that!"

So I look at him. I never saw him before in my life, and he makes a remark like that. Nu, anything can happen up there in the mountains. "Why, what's the matter with going to services on Friday evening? It means something to me!"

"Well, I can't see it. Don't go in for that, that ritualism, wouldn't catch me tying myself down to anything like that stuff."

And I was going to continue talking with him, when he excused himself and said he had to dress for dinner. I forgot, it was Friday. Had to dress for dinner—suits, you know, the custom of the place, society, fashion, stuff.

Well, in days of old, came "erev shabbos," with "Lehoh Dodi," with singing, with a spirit of sanctity and peace. And here was "erev shabbos," and everyone was dressed beautifully, silks and satins and diamond rings, and even nylons. But no "lehoh dodi," only cheap talk, like, "My horse came in today

eaned up," or "Will the dice room be ened tonight?"

What's doing tonight? I wondered.

Before dinner I spotted my fat friend earing a very fine Palm Beach suit, and his hand he had another camera, a iniature one. He was standing near a gn that read, "No Smoking On The bbath," but I could not get near him, d, in the dining room he was seated another table. So I just waited to tch him outside and talk later. But I d wonder what he meant by "stuff."

The proletarian Jewish waiters worked noothly and fast, anxious to please, al- ays eager to supply another portion of icken liver, a little Schnaps. They had eat purposes in life, too; tips were high ere.

And there was talk, lots of talk. No noking upstairs (the signs said so), but lk of races, and the word was passed round that there would be a show in e basement, where smoking was permit- d—so as not to offend the old people pstairs.

Shabbos night. Refreshment of spirit, a use in the grind of life, social impli- ations, the dream of the prophets of d, the prophets of the people dedicated God.

When the fat man got up, I followed im out of the dining room. I wasn't ure whether it was because I wanted to ontinue the conversation, or whether I st wanted to leave that room full of lver platters that rhymed with the silver f the hands.

Dear little prophets of old—not your Marxist of today, who bows for tips and ives double portions of blintzes — dear rophet of old, yell your head off about iamonds that support the love of a oman, yell at the preponderance of perations on deviated septums, yell at the cameras which warm the soul unwarmed by the mezuzzah!

In the course of our conversation the fat man told me again that he didn't go in for emotionalism, ornamentation, or the superficiality with which religion was associated. Still listening to him, I noticed his silk tie, as he said, "I must see and touch and hear what I am to believe in. That is all there is to it."

He made his statements without looking at me, made them as if a thousand times before he had broken the spirit of the fool, blowing out his defiant, free, unorthodox words.

"Listen," he said, "this world is nothing but an atomic conglomeration." (He pronounced 'Atomic' carefully to impress me.) "Nothing happens except under natural law. It's got to be measured, or else I won't accept it. I don't go in for that emotionalism."

It was too good a chance to let slip, but he started it, and I felt like talking, so I asked, simply, "What are you living for?" And then, to be cute, "Do you ever pray?"

"Pray? Me pray? No, Sonny, I play. There's only one thing that counts and that is the *yankee dollar*. I am the free man. I have my hobbies," he touched his camera.

"I see," I answered.

He told me he got this camera at a steal from a refugee. And then he handed me a picture from a newspaper and explained that he had won a first prize in the World Times. This was the picture.

"Doesn't mean a thing to me. I don't go in for this stuff," I commented, "All I see are thousands of dots."

His clean shaven face turned red; he was flustered and he stammered, "Look

at those shadows, the way the light falls; I took this picture at F."

"All I see are thousands of dots, on paper. All I know is that you set a mathematically exact light meter against your subject, and by following certain set and orthodox rituals you got this photo."

"But, but. . . ."

"Not only that, you made a negative and a print, mailed it to an animal in a concrete and steel building where the World Times is published, and by chemical reaction, followed by mechanical action of said animal, you received notice that you won first prize. In due time you received some money, representing so much in this particular economic set-up."

He looked at me as if I were crazy. He kept insisting that there was more to his picture than mechanics. "There's a heart, there's. . . ."

I kept going, "You just pushed a button, and a natural law dictated, coldly and exactly, atomically, if you will, that this had to be, and that's all there was to it."

"There's a plus to it," he muttered, as I imagined I heard his idol smash to the marble floor.

"A plus, a more, a heart? All I see is paper with dots on it. Now, when I think of this world, this cold world, and when I go to services, and stuff like that, you tell me it's nothing, that atoms are bosses. Then when I talk about your picture, your dots, you say, 'No, there's more to it.' Well, if your picture has a plus, so has my world. . . . And, listen, you go to your camera, go to "IT," pray and let it bring you peace. But be careful, careful you don't expose your film too much."

He turned away and hurried towards the dice room. He left me standing there. And I really felt sorry. There's so much unhappiness in the world as it is. Maybe I should have kept my mouth shut? But tell me, is it my fault I never saw a camera I would want to pray to?

To Our Brothers of the Warsaw Ghetto

By FRIEDA CLARK HYMAN

When your bloodless hand engraved the doom of brutes
Upon that obscene wall,
I wondered as I lay beneath an unscarred sun
That stars came out at eventide,
That not a mountain moved,
And not a hill dissolved into a rubbled plain.

Thus confused and dazed,
I fathomed not the full formed glory
Of your shining deed;
Nor understood
That mountains are more easily moved
Than treachery from the hearts of men.

When mankind wept upon the naked sands of Dunkirk
The peaks of Britain pierced its mist of tears.
When mankind strove within the pits of Stalingrad
The breath of Russia whispered in its pounding ears.

But you, oh our brothers,
What vision could you see
Through hate's cement?
And what sound could you detect
'Midst terror's grim cacophonies?

When you froze your insane flesh
Into its icy purpose,
Too well you knew
The spoils of victory for us:
The mannered pledge, the bannered lie
Of mealy men of tactics.
And yet 'twas you—
The tortured friendless remnant of our race—
Who flung your manhood at the iron tanks
And saved the pride of man
For history's impoverished scroll.

Now let us pile, O my people,
Each holy ghetto stone
Into an awesome cairn.
It shall be a sign 'twixt them and us
More sacred than the first pure altar
Built on Canaan's soil.
No jewelled sword of monarch
Shall be offered on her crimson rock,
But these two burning vows:

No wall on earth shall rise again
To trap and crush the souls of men;
No wall—be it of brick or guns—
to bar from Zion Zion's sons.

For this you've taught us, oh our brothers,
You who made of shameful ghetto streets
A battlefield of honor and immortal lights:
It is we who shape our destiny,
We, and we alone.

"Not So Great Hatred"

By BERTRAM A. ROSENBER

IT was long long ago. And amid the headlong, mechanical rush of Time, in the last few years, the tumultuous confusion, like a spinning color-wheel, one finds the simple memories of a few years back, as difficult to recollect as if they were the very Dinosaur Age.

However, I do recall that the concept denoted by the term "hatred," did not have vividness in the minds of any of us. We had our dislikes, our disaffections, our angers, for various stimuli—the iceman, who charged us for the ice he lost as water, the butcher, who held his little finger on the scale, or left the feathers on the chicken as he weighed the poundage, or the laundryman who always innocently, apologetically, made a mistake in the weight of our goods, or the boy next door, who played the saxophone (oi, oi, if it were drums!) or the schoolteacher, who gave our sons and daughters low marks ("She's just out to ruin my child's career," we'd say) . . . all these, all these, were our dislikes, our disaffections, our angers, and we got mad over them. But the emotion of "hatred," violent, killer-like, obsessive, eating us up, did not exist, save in rare cases. In certain sections of the country, in certain occupational clashes, in certain moments of passion, there was hatred, the hatred of economic struggles, the hatred of prejudices, but in the heart of a little Jewish lad, who repeated, day by day, the *"v'ahavta,"* in his daily prayers,, the emotion of "hatred," found little place.

1938 . . . November 1938 . . . Nuremburg Laws . . . "Death to *Juden*" . . . "Horst Wessel" . . . Black-figured killers on the March. . . .

I remember reading,

". . . The Nazis opened one of t vilest little chapters in the Nazi decad record of unblemished vileness. Th pounced upon a handful of enervate helpless, human beings and assigned the to death by slavery. These were old pe ple, raw from much suffering and ab to feel with double sensitivity each blo Their fondest hope was to die quiet and from natural causes, not torture. T have executed them would have been a most humanitarian, too much for Na taste.

"In the dead of night, when the o people had either gone to bed or we undressing, the Gestapo fell upon ther They were given a quarter of an ho to pack, to settle the affairs of a life-tim and leave homes, they had lived in sin childhood. They were herded into a Syn gogue in Pasanen Strasse, and, while th flames leapt from its three great dome and its windows, the party men ha ordered the jazz band next door in th Wiener Grenzing Cafe to play louder s that music might be heard by peop watching the fire from the streets, a almost orgiastic performances. Some we lucky and were stuffed, after a train tri into disease ridden ghettos, others shippe into remote sections to work themselv to death. Many, more fortunate, ma aged to commit suicide."

Thus was hatred, like poison overflow ing a cup, infused drop by drop na absorbed in the minds and hearts of u Jews, who had to read of these account to watch our parents' tears, to see th temporary black border around our live In the successive years, we attended per odic meetings in memory of the bodie and souls of the tortured European Jews

odically, we uttered the outcries of a odically disturbed American Jewry. always left these meetings, with ed up hearts and feelings of frus- on and anger at the hordes of rapa- beasts that ravaged our people, and, ed with the motive to kill. This was red, being germinated, being fed, be- fostered, developing through all the es of creeping, standing, crawling . . . ting . . . until maturity. Now my red was full-grown. I remember frus- ed dreams at night in which,

. . So, this State awards you, its est honors, for the mass obliteration he cruel killers from Germany, awards its most coveted decoration for the ghter of . . ."

ut all this was mind-killing, killing phantasy. More and more did Ha- become a crushing vital function of body, but never was it actually fed, ally appeased. Never did one actually a Nazi, actually see form and flesh. . . . 941 . . . December 1941 . . . "Japs ack Pearl Harbor" . . . America De- es War" . . . Greetings . . . And "the ssons go Rolling Along. . . ."

The Army of the United States, found acancy they couldn't fill, so, in a Gov- rnental decree involving much elabor- complicated machinery, they sent for I kissed my loved ones goodbye and t knightly forth to my post to my as- ment, as a . . . K.P. They introduced to many others who were also filling ortant missions. Somehow I sensed be- val, or at least being slighted, in truth led. They never hinted in the "Greet- s," that there would be moments of h prosaicness. . . .

For many months, I prepared for com- . The hatred, for the killers of my ple expanded through my cortex. Now ated them for new things, for break- up my home, my friend's homes, for the long marches, and the beating ca- dence of Army discipline, for loneliness and homesickness, for the "hurry up and wait" philosophy of Army orders, for all these personal hurts. I even bought a combat knife (really using it to cut GI steak). Now I believed I was ready to graduate my hatred, to test it in actual face-to- face relationship with the Swastika, with the enemy.

The Army moves in mysterious ways. I was suddenly transferred to a General Hospital for temporary duty. Here, I was assigned to an advanced psycho ward. One day I heard we were receiving a German War Prisoner. I exploded. Ha- tred particles, pressed upon my reason. . . . What would I do? How would I react? Here at last a body, arms, legs, eyes, hair, to come close to. What would this Nazi look like? Was he human? Was he terrifying? The mountain had come to Mohammed.

And now I quote from my diary of let- ters that I sent home because they show just what happened to a little Jewish lad from Brooklyn, when, suffocating with hate, he met the Nazi menace.

July 1

Dearest:

Today, they assigned me to the caring- for of the nutty German prisoner. They have him upstairs in a locked room. They wanted me to take care of him, to feed him, and watch him. I refused! They took me in to see the Ward Officer. The Of- ficer asked me why I did not want to care for this patient. My reply almost ver- batim was—

"Sir, I am Jewish. This—this man and what he represents, what he has done to those of my people leads me to hate his guts. I know this is wrong here, I do not want to disobey an order but how can you ask me to cater to this beast, when my only thought, intuitive, reflective is

to smash him. I would appreciate it, sir, if another man were appointed to the job. However, if there is no one else . . ."

The officer thought for a moment and very frankly and kindly said,

"Sergeant get another man for this job."

Then he turned to me and said,

"I can't blame you son, I feel the same way, but I can't avoid it."

July 2

Dearest—

"I didn't sleep so well last night. Was my refusal to take care of the German prisoner, one of fear, fear to face this killer of my people, fear of my going off the handle? Did I adjust myself properly to the situation? Can I control this hate? Am I subconcsiously affected by the Nazi propaganda, as to my lack of courage, that I wished to avoid contact with Superman? Well, anyway, I asked the Officer to be assigned to the job. I got it!"

July 3

Dearest—

I pushed myself into the locked room, where the German prisoner sat. I was immediately struck with the human qualities of the animal; how plainly a man! How distorted has been the Nazi propaganda! This soldier of the Blackness, 20 years old or less, with pimply complexion, like a kid from Brownsville. He is a short person, five-foot five, having thinnish legs and a barrel-round chest. His hair is Germanically close-cropped. His eyes are brown, and twinkle almost childishly for a soldier of twenty or more years old. According to his ravings, he has been through several campaigns, notably the Russian and Italian. He is terrified, he the masterlord, of the Russians, and accuses them of burying him alive in a cold grave. His reaction to the sign of the Swastika (playfully thrust u him by the attendants) is—"*Shavash shtunk*" to Hitler's picture "*Hitler shtu* to the Nazi salute—a gutteral raspbe to the "Rule Brittania," "the British not win. the war, the *Schweinh Amerikaner* will." He appears consta to be searching for something, occasion finding it under his mattress and t loudly whacking it. His favorite sub is women or *Fräulein,* women ,of wh he had undoubtedly taken many. eats with relish and seems out of cl acter upon smoking. When we come take him for a cold pack, he beco purposefully helpless and we drag h forward, while he wiggles his "behin

Today he was allowed to walk abou the corridor, unguarded. He wrap himself thoroughly in a blanket (e over his head) like an Arab and shuff about occasionally finding inexpressi delight in scaring the other patients. Up being stripped he shows extreme sensitiv to his nakedness, immediately covering private parts. One draws from his acti that this was a formidable foe, cra intelligent, and brave. But one also s merely a man able to be killed, able to captured and certainly not endow with any Superman powers of destru tion, that would be unstoppable, a engulf a world. The Nazi philosophy bragging cannot alter the observation th this Nazi is a mere human being, who e joys human pleasures and has hum feelings, even on the battlefield.

July 4

Dearest—

Today I watched (guarded) the Ge man prisoner take a bath. The bath administered for a quieting effect. B this was far from that. He talked, san and shouted his head off. I attempted converse slightly with my Yiddish, matc ing his German. Once we sang the "Ma

llaise" together and I heard his "Horst essel." Often he used the word "*Judenhwein.*" Once he became troublesome d began to splash the water all about st as Nancy Kelly, the movie actress as passing by, I shouted with vehemnce—

"*Shveig, hund, oder ze vet geben un ap in kop erein.*"

In poor Yiddish and in poorer German is means—"Quiet dog, or I'll give you smack in the head."

He became quiet saying—

"O.K.—*un moment, shtoop*—O.K."

July 5

earest—

Most of the boys here concur in the ought that—

a. One would rather kill him than eat him.

b. One wonders how many Americans he has killed.

c. He's getting far better service than deserves.

Where was all my hatred? Where the ge to smash this thing, to step upon head, and crunch it into dust! What had happened to the great hatred that had been accumulated within, for so long a time. .. . Pity! pity! the little Jewish lad from Brownsville shed off all this hatred, as if it were a foreign excrescence, instead of a deep life urge. For so it was—the great hatred, was a "not so great hatred." Why?

Two reasons explain. One, that all the destruction of the Nazis was not a personal thing, happening directly, to my senses. Two, that the many years of Jewish education and training had instilled, subconsciously, a too strong antidote to a "Great Hatred." My God was one of love, of pity, of gentleness. So it seemed to me. Now, in my quiet moments, I wonder about all this that has happened to me. I wonder too, whether this attitude is general in the make-up of all our people. Will we ever have the courage to stand up and fight for all our rights? I wonder if we have the right mixture of hatred, of love and gentleness properly to combat our foes, and to defend our Eretz Yisrael.

I don't know.

Book Notes

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF AMERICAN YIDDISH POETRY

EMSHEKH, An Anthology of American Yiddish Poetry from 1918 *to* 1943, *Hemshekh Farlog,* 1945.

A FEW weeks after the 75th anniversary of the Yidsh press in America, early in March, n anthology of contemporary American iddish poetry appeared. For a journalt like myself, this coincidence has spe- al meaning. First, the press was the gateway to the public for most of these poets. Second, and even more significant, a major portion of the verse included, particularly that of the last decade, echoes the themes and tenor of the press.

The fifty men and women presented in the anthology sing of all poetic truths, as poets do everywhere and at all times. But this contemporary group also records the course of Jewish life so faithfully that you can follow the calendar of Jewish events and barely miss a moment that the historian would note. It is as if the

Jewish people had appointed each to act as poet-laureate. And since the period covered in the volume (1918-1943) marks the most severe dislocation and decimation of Jews in modern history, most of the verses are lamentations.

These poets, upon whom no doctrine has been imposed and who grew up and matured in a climate sufficiently kind to mitigate the sharp pressure weighing upon Jews elsewhere, nevertheless reverberate to every tremor of universal Jewish life. The lure of liberty brought them to this country. But oppression is the lot of other Jews, and therefore, the motif of these poems. Poverty brought many to this rich land, but the hunger of their brothers haunts the fat years here. The endless physical vistas of America beckon to them and they answer. But they dwell in their brothers' ghettos and walk by thin light and heavy shadows. They are drawn to the broad cultural horizons about them, but return voluntarily to their own Jewish home. They etch the forms of life around them, but the strokes of Jewish life are made bolder, for fear that they may vanish in the felicities of the freedom that is theirs.

The anthology called Hemshekh, the Hebrew for *continuity*, contains some 350 poems. Fifteen of the fifty authors are women. With the exception of three — curiously enough all of them native American women—the others came to this country shortly before the World War I or in the period between the two wars. They came from Poland, Russia, Galicia, Lithuania and Bessarabia. All the poems in the collection sprouted from the American soil, to be more specific, from the pavements of New York. For this Hemshekh volume does not include the contemporary Yiddish poetry produced in the Middle-West and on the Pacific Coast, which is quite considerable. The anthologist, Moshe Starkman, whose forte is Jewish bibliography, tells us in th preface that more Hemshekh volumes ar to follow, that he chose the name Hem shekh to indicate the continuity of Yiddis verse in this country from its beginning of 50 years ago with Morris Rosenfeld on through the decades and the variou transmutations of Jewish life here.

Actually, the present volume does no by far cover the entire Yiddish poeti scene even within the period prescribe by the compiler. In fact, some of the most illustrious poets of this very perio and locale are omitted, such as the lat M. L. Halpern, Moshe Nadir, H. Leivick A. Glanz-Leyles, J. J. Schwartz, Mena chem Boraisha and others who gav American Yiddish poetry its stature and grandeur. Others have given prominence to the prominent, and Mr. Starkman's wish was apparently to gather unto himself the younger and more obscure. Fifty authors is a very imposing figure for any literary locale in any one given epoch. And certainly, Mr. Starkman's approach has more of generosity than of selection. He obviously sacrificed discrimination for documentary scope, and what we have is a handbook rather than the usual anthology which purports to introduce the most representative and select names. The poets have indeed a very warm friend in the compiler, for it seems that he can find a niche for anyone with verses. The more discerning will find a too democratic attitude toward the poets, but the student of the American Yiddish literary scene will find the book invaluable as the picture and expression of a portion of a generation of Jews in this country.

Hemshekh does include a number of the more famous contemporaries. Jacob Gladstone, who is without doubt the most distinguished of the American-bred Yiddish poets, is present. He is not only one of the most prolific, but he has become the poets' poet. His virtuosity has grown

tth the years and his artistic strength ss ripened with maturity. Like so many his immigrant group from the *heder* kd *yeshivah* and *gymnasium* of Eastern urope, he struck out for a more worldly here in the New World, only to return the Jewish scene and the *Yiddishe zss.* And like many of the others, he enly follows the trend in world literare, but his own gifts are devoted to ddish poetry. He has given the lanage lustre and multicolored word patrns. His lines dazzle and challenge. here is the wisdom of the aged and agess Jew in his philosophy. And in the cent years, his lines quiver with the hinous portents of the "end" that might me to his people, to his language, which visualized in a poem as an "almond rig growing in the desert," and to his od who "without Jews cannot be."

Other better known names are placed le by side with the more obscure: iezer Greenberg is responsible for inmerable translations from the works of merican poets and follows sedulously the ost esoteric trends in world literature. s approach is that of a lyricist, but the xture is heavy-laden with grief and ife and protest. Sitting by our own failiar Hudson River, he finds himself ck in his native Bessarabia; and by the aceful waters of New York, he is oused from the nightmare of the Nazi assacre in his native land, and says: "I yself, here too, want to put on the ellow Badge." There is Anna Maroglin no has added some of the most patrician es to Yiddish poetry. As with many of r colleagues, it is the ancestral which mforts and strengthens her. She sees e procession of her forebears "tramping through her as through a dark use." She sings of her native Brisk "now ad like Athens and like Troy."

N. B. Minkov came from lawyers' row the street of the poets, and helped pave the way for the introspective school in Yiddish poetry. Of this school is also B. Alquit, who conjures up strange and exotic images. "The light of Spring hangs on a trapeze," he says when describing April on Mulberry Street (down-town slum). Or he tells of his neighbor, a German singing the Lorelei and professing friendship for him like the "dampness of night in salt." There is Aleph Katz, with a crystalline air and lithe rhythm even in the most sombre subject matter. He summarizes the benighted year 1942 on the Jewish calendar, and sees the sea and land and forests of Europe as repositories for the martyred Jews, with a macabre inscription "flying on burning wings." He is a master of the ballad and fable which have the lilting tones of nursery rhymes but flash back with sad and bitter irony.

L. Feinberg who came here with an accredited place in the Imagist group of the Russian Revolutionary era, transferred to Yiddish poetry some daring new images. His ballad of the "Last Three Jews of Warsaw" is as harrowing a photograph of the city becoming *Judenrein* as any newsreel shot, with a persistent refrain of martyrdom cutting through it. There is Rachel Veprinski, whose verse is utterly and consciously feminine, coming from the female heart and returning directly to it. Celia Dropkin is graver in her femininity. She is either mother, wife or daughter, and sometimes the lost child. Her word structure is meticulous and her voice is beautifully modulated.

These and others in this older and more prominent category are well established in Yiddish letters and their works have appeared in book form and in previous anthologies. Among the better known of the younger group is J. L. Teller, a product of the American school system and the Yeshivas. He is a most interesting synthesis of deep Jewishness and young America. He sings of Ezekiel with due

reverence, but injects the skepticism of his own time and environment. He draws the contours of a Negro girl with references to Bath-Sheba. Another interesting poet in this younger group is Meier Shticker who introduces a delightful folk flavor but without the corny, banal tang. He recapitulates his plebian background in simple, unadorned lines. But the echo is fierce. His ballad about the two uncles, one evil and rich the other righteous and poor, is told in neat, almost bare lines. But his revolt strikes you with a heavy thump.

It is interesting to note that four of the poets in the anthology came to Yiddish by way of Hebrew letters and continue to create in both languages. Abraham Twersky's verses are redolent with the deep religiosity and sanctity of man which he imbibed in his Hasidic home. Gabriel Preil, of a noted rabbinical family, is most tender in his lyrics. Even his elegy on his martyred brothers "whose only sun is the long, last night" carries no more bitterness than the ode to a New Hampshire girl whose face is like the white north country," only "her red lips—the door to a sealed summer." Unlike these two bilingual poets who grew up in the rich cultural Jewish soil of Eastern Europe — Abraham Regelson is a New Yorker since early childhood. He is among the most distinguished of the younger Hebraists in this country and translated many American authors into Hebrew and vice-versa. His poems in Hemshekh are of a more recent phase in his life, the left-wing trend. In one poem, "The Magen David Greets the Red Star," he reconciles the two symbols in a vivid picture of a gift ambulance from the workers of Palestine carrying medical supplies to Soviet Russia. His comment is: "The medicaments grew in the shadow of the Gilboa Mountains and Zionism was nurtured in the soil of Russia."

Referring to the left wing poets, it must be pointed out that among the dozen or so represented in the anthology, the red streak is wholly invisible. The revolutionary motif is no harsher in their poems than in the verses of struggle and strife of the more conservative colleagues. In fact, the subject matter and approach are indistinguishable, except that many of the left-wingers are more recent recruits and saw print only with the aid of their press. Thus, in most cases, they have more emotion than talent, more credo than artistry.

Among the older and best known in this group is Malka Lee. Her language is luminous and her style distinguished. She narrates to her child her lineage, her *"yihus"* from Abraham down to Deborah, down to the Baal-Shem Tov, father of Hasidism, down through Spinoza and Karl Marx and Heine and Sholem Aleichem, and exhorts her offspring to keep sacred this legacy. Moshe Shifris is another of the most prominent in this group. He also goes way back into his deeply Jewish past and tells of his father immersed in the Torah with mother watching him, "joy and pride brimming over the edges of her shining eyes." Another of his poems is about a Negro bootblack reviewing the gamut of his oppression from poverty to the noose prepared for him by lynchers. It is punctuated by a refrain—the sharp command of the white customer to get on with his job quickly.

The left-wingers by no means speak exclusively in the proletarian voice. One of them Ber Green is outraged in one poem over Bloody Monday in Detroit. In another he weeps for the "blind death of a worker." And Anna Zaretsky, who is mild and lyrical and intensely nationalistic in her ode to a *halutz* in Palestine, is most ardent in her tribute to the Russian partisans scorching the earth as the enemy

proaches. Martin Birnbaum, a left-nger, befriends an unemployed man rrowing through garbage cans. And L. Kalushiner, of the older and classical icists, reaches out to the tramps slouch-g in the dark hallways of the Bowery. A word about the three native Ameri-n poetesses in the collection. The most portant of them is Hasie Cooperman, New Yorker with a doctorate from Co-mbia. Her doctoral thesis was on the esthetics of Stephane Mallarmé," under of the French symbolist school letters. Miss Cooperman employs a rsterious, often eerie style in construct-g her images, such as "twilight filled th steel." Then there is Haika Abel-n, a native of Connecticut. Her first ok of Yiddish poetry appeared when was 16. Her voice is soft and humble, en plaintive. And R. Z. Lillien, a Ne-askan, had no Jewish training until came to New York as a young girl. note of deep pathos runs through her es, whether she is capturing an echo her mother's voice or telling of her na-e city, Omaha.

A very stirring portion of the collection is group of poems dedicated to living ets by their contemporaries or eulogiz-colleagues no longer alive. The Yiddish ets are attached one to another both life and in death. Notwithstanding the n yield of their poetry in this country, re is the feeling and the knowledge t their circle is circumscribed, their dience limited, their language, which es life to their thought and emotion, n to so many Jews—the Jews about om they write and for whom they te. It is this feeling of individual and lective aloneness that welds them ely together in life, and leaves them lhaned and desolate when one of them s. Thus the eulogies on M. L. Halpern, ster poet, are numerous and impas-ned. There is a lone tribute to a lone soul, the late A. M. Dillon, whom the poetess Esther Sumiacher sees on his death bed, "A Jewish poet who led his poems for forty years through the desert." There are loving words for Abba Stolzenberg, the young poet who died a couple of years ago, by his colleagues.

The anthologist tells us that there will be more *Hemshekh* volumes coming. We thus shall hear more voices of young Jews in America. Perhaps one day these voices will be heard in English translation.

JEAN JAFFE

Correspondence

The American Council for Judaism Protests

(*This letter was received too late for publication before the summer suspension.*)

Sirs:

Thank you for sending me a marked copy of your issue of June 15th in which you comment on my article "Jews Must Choose" in the June issue of the *Information Bulletin* of the American Council for Judaism. I hope you will allow me some space in your columns, not to discuss your general analysis, but to make two corrections and one other observation.

You refer to my quoting with approval from an editorial in *The Reconstructionist* and adduce the "fallacy of the false dilemma." Unfortunately, you omitted one-half of the quotation — and the important half at that. The sentence that you omitted, as taken from your own editorial, reads as follows:

"We have not yet determined whether we are to use the term race, religion, nation or culture to qualify the nature of our Jewish entity and identity."

I call to your attention that *you* use "term" in the singular and the optive "or."

I wish, too, to protest against your attributing to me the view that "ethical monotheism" is he "whole content" of Judaism. Nowhere in the article is that said.

Your readers can learn what I did say by turning to the article itself. I invite them to write to me for a copy, to my office, 381 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

It is true that I attempt an epitomizing; but that is pardonable since it is in a great traditon. Incidentally, I daresay Hillel's utterance as to what constitutes the whole Law would meet with equal criticism from you: "That is it not uniquely or exclusively Jewish."

Permit me one final observation. You at-

tack Dr. Berger on the basis of a newspaper reporter's statement, (the authenticity of which you did not check) ; and you express a sense of outrage at presumed "suppressions." May I point out, however, that this outcry would come with better grace if in the past three years there had been similar protests at the innumerable acts of suppression, smearing, innuendo and boycott which have victimized those associated with the American Council of Judaism. I know — and not from hearsay — of numerous instances of personal villification ; of dragging reputations in the gutter ; of calculated, malicious injury to a man's good name and professional activities ; and I fail to recall a single instance where those who hold your viewpoint spoke up in public condemnation of these foul and indecent tactics against fellow-Jews who availed themselves of the democratic freedom to express and advocate their principles.

Yet, you must agree with me that it is still good sense (and good morality) to come into court with clean hands.

SIDNEY WALLACH

June 14, 1945

Mr. Wallach quotes a statement of ours as evidence that we, too, regard race, religion, nation and culture as mutually exclusive alternative conceptions of the nature of Judaism from among which Jews must choose. He bases his whole argument on the use of the word *or* in the passage quoted. We cannot avoid certain ambiguities inherent in the English language. The word *or* lends itself to misinterpretation, as is evidenced by the barbaric device that uses *and/or* in legalistic terminology in anticipation of just such quibbling as Mr. Wallach's. Nobody who does not want to misinterpret our position could doubt for a moment that we conceive of Judaism as both religious and nationalistic, an "evolving religious civilization, the civilization of the Jewish people."

Mr. Wallach charges us further with crediting a newspaper reporter's statement, but he does not deny the correctness of that statement. He complains that the American Council for Judaism has not always been treated with respect and consideration by the Jewish public. He should understand that those who sabotage the efforts and frustrate the yearnings of their people for a free, secure and dignified existence must expect the righteous wrath that they arouse not to be too scrupulous about exceeding the nice amenities of polite controversy.

EDITORS

Is Orthodoxy Consistent with Judaism?

Sirs:

In his article, "Is Orthodoxy Consistent with Democracy?", Sidney Morgenbesser defends Dr. Kaplan's right to experiment with the *Siddur* and to think out new systems on which to base Jewish living. He claims that the issue is between the following two opposing ideas. The first is that Judaism like any philosophical system, contains a certain number of basic axioms whch are not to be changed under any circumstances. The second idea which opposes the first is that enlightenment challenges this static conglomeration of "truths" and claims the right to question, and, if need be, to change them.

This latter idea, by which Rabbi Morgenbesser defends Dr. Kaplan's right to experiment with the *Siddur,* is based — surprisingly enough — not on Judaism, but on a combination of the philosophical ideas of change and development, and the modern concept of freedom of speech. If we are trying to make necessary changes in Judaism, we ought to ask ourselvs not whether philosophy gives us the right to make these changes, but whether Judaism gives us this right. Thus, in defence of Dr. Kaplan, it would be far better for us to ask the question, "Is Orthodoxy consistent with *Judaism*?"

No. Orthodoxy is not consistent with Judaism. Orthodoxy views Judaism as based on dogmas and creeds which are conspicuously absent in rabbinic Judaism. Moreover, Orthodoxy denies the right of the individual to state his own interpretation of Torah and claims that there is only one correct interpretation. That this is not true, is shown by the fact that one rabbi may give one *drash* of a verse and another rabbi, immediately following, give another *drash* of the same verse.

Judaism does give Dr. Kaplan the right to make changes in the *Siddur.* At the time of the Mishnah the prayer book was, as yet, uncrystalized, and thus *Maseket Rosh Hashanah* allows the individual to choose which nine verses he may use for *Malkuyot, Zikronot* and *Shofarot.* Whether we live in a sufficiently Jewish atmosphere to make changes in the *Siddur* which will be in accordance with Jewish tradition is another matter. But Judaism does give us this right. Why, then, must we, to seek this right, go to a culture, which while good in itself, ought not to be our guide in Jewish matters?

PHINEAS KADUSHIN

CORRECTION

In our last issue, we stated in a foot note to the poem, The Law, by Alice Seligsberg, that it was written during her last illness in Palestine. That was an error. Miss Seligsberg spent her last year in America and the poem was written in New York.

EDITOR